

# The Bear's Tooth

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Summary: Merida is off on another adventure in the distant and dangerous land known as the Bear's Tooth! Hiccup is just a poor guy that got lost in a storm and is trying to figure out where he is without being harassed by little glowing people.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*I had to. I really couldn't resist. It just seemed like so much fun to write. I'm just hoping I get their personalities right with their scenes. Enjoy.\*\***

Prologue: Forbidden Lands

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Biting into an apple, Merida looked off from an overhang towards the forbidden lands that she and Angus had never ventured into before, far past the border of Dun'Broch's country, and a forbidden vicinity to her, until today. The vast land, known as "the Bear's Tooth," was a mystery to all as it cut in one jagged hook formation out towards the sea lined with sudden cliffs and drops, littered with all sorts of wildlife, and the only man-made thing that could be seen from Merida's high view was a clutter of mossy and cracked stones of an abandoned kingdom's castle.

Technically, all of this was still forbidden by her mother, Elinor, but Merida had already traveled through the far reaches inside the borders of her kingdom in her few years of life, she loved it all. Every tree, every cliff, every waterfall, every stream, every forest trail, every road, every village, every town was a part of her illustrious world. But, there had to be something new and riveting out there, just beyond the horizon and far into the forests and mountains that were left unexplored and untouched by any citizen of

Dun'Broch.

Travelers, believing the ruins of the once-great-castle in Merida's sights to be cursed and inhabited by Red Cap\*, and that Kelpies\* frolicked freely in the lakes and rivers that cut through the land, took longer ways around and scarcely wandered through the land, leaving a complete open wilderness for Merida to face. With Scotia\* as her witness, Merida vowed between bites that she would travel to the sharp tip of those lands in the far distance and return home without a single scratch!

How did she plan to accomplish this? By asking the right parent, that's how. Her father, King Fergus of Dun'Broch, was more approving of Merida's wild side than her mother. After the entire bear "incident," as it was popularly known now, died down a little, Merida and her Mother were closer and able to communicate better, but that still didn't mean they saw everything eye to eye. Exploring vast unknown woods still sent her mother into one of her "moods," as Merida had dubbed them, and earned her a relentless amount of nagging when she came home.

So, to avoid such an issue, Merida asked her father to go on a hunting trip, alone, in the far reaches of their western kingdom, with the excuse of it being a rather fruitful hunting province to pose as her explanation for going so far. Her father, although a jokester and rather layback man, wasn't careless with his own daughter, and took his time (an entire agonizing week) to think it over. About halfway through that week her mother heard about it, but since Merida came to her father first, it was mainly his decision. The alone part is what put both her parents most on edge, but after agreeing to having an escort, who Merida could easily avoid, she was free to go for two weeks. It took three days just to get here, so Merida only had eight or so days to explore!

Her escort had set up camp about a mile away, at least, from where Merida was currently standing beside Angus, and he had the uncanny ability to make himself scarce at the most appropriate of times. He wouldn't follow her, by her own request, but he knew her general direction she was going in and how to find her if she didn't return the next day. All that was left for the princess of Dun'Broch to do was to escape into the forests and see all the sights that only a few whispered legends ever told of. Lost in the whirling tide of her own excitement, she eagerly pursued the adventure that awaited her. How was she supposed to know that she'd be getting much more than an encounter with an easily out-smarted Kelpie?

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"Okay, Buddy, I'm almost completely sure we're going in the right direction this time," Hiccup said looking at his clumsily drawn charts through the thick fog. Toothless let out an unsatisfied growl. Hiccup rolled his eyes and looked back at the notebook he tried to keep flat in his hand. A pencil could only be so steady on the constantly shifting back of a dragon, and the paper shifting constantly in the wind wasn't a help either.

Toothless had been flying for a day and a half now, and the poor guy wasn't going to make it much longer. In retrospect, flying into that cloud wasn't the best idea. For one thing, there had been a storm brewing inside, which Hiccup was completely unaware of at the time,

which caused them to start into a frantic zig-zag of panic and adrenaline. For another, it lasted "a very long time" it was sort of ridiculous. Thor\* probably had it in for Hiccup. For the last, there was no logical reason for him to have gone in there, he just did. It probably had something to do with the "incident," as Hiccup had dubbed it, getting to his head again.

Anyway, somehow, the storm cloud had landed the both of them in the middle of nowhere over the distant sea and there was nothing but water everywhere and fog high in the skies. They couldn't even fly past it without Hiccup suffocating and freezing. Toothless probably could have climbed higher, but he wasn't going to risk his friend's life because of something as petty as fog.

Toothless couldn't even use his instincts to take them back, because everything was too strange and the few scents and sounds were nothing that triggered a feeling deep in his gullet and through his ears that'd give him any sort of signal to turn around . Nope. It was just Hiccup and a hand-drawn map of a few markers (mostly a bunch of rocks that led to uninhabited islands) they had taken a break on. Yep, they were doomed.

"I know you're tired buddy. If we don't find Berk soon, we'll just try and find one of those islands again and we'll figure something out later," Hiccup said encouragingly. They had done the same thing yesterday and by now Hiccup's stomach was starting to talk to him. He didn't want to wait out this fog. It seemed to be lasting forever! They didn't have any food and even when Toothless did catch fish (and not that much while we're at it), all Hiccup really had on him was the notebook and he was not planning on ever having raw fish ever again. He starved yesterday, but that plan was probably going have to change if things started to get desperate. With Odin as his witness, Hiccup was not going to get that desperate!

Toothless suddenly let out an excited roar and accelerated. Hiccup hadn't been paying attention to the skies and instantly jerked his head up searching for something that went wrong. Something always went wrong. To his relief, there wasn't any sort of evil sea creature or large bolder, just some land in the distance

Wait! Hiccup's eyes widened as he saw the horizon of pure, lush, green land only a few miles away. Finally! Thank the gods! No fish!

There was only one problem. It looked absolutely nothing like Berk. Instead of one large sturdy mountain-like island, it was a vast terrain that stretched on until it faded in with the overhead fog on both ends. The particular corner of land before them stuck out like a sharp dragon's tooth and cut straight into the water. What was this place?

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\*\*\*Red Cap is a mythical creature that looks like a short old man with a blood-stained red cap and haunts old castles and his only weakness is if his victim says quote from the Bible.\*\*

\*\*\*Kelpies are horse-like water devil creatures that will trick

passing travelers that pass by and drown them. But, they have a soft spot for millers and help them with business by keeping the mill wheel running at night.\*\*

\*\*\*Scotia is the main Scottish god and Scotland is named after her. I don't know if Merida is Christian or not, didn't catch that in the movie, so I'm going with this.\*\*

\*\*\*Thor: go watch \*\*\_\*\*the Avengers\*\*\_\*\*. \*\*

\*\*Comments, criticisms, tips, questions. I'd like to know what you guys thought about it.\*\*

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*This is like late 10\*\*\*\*th\*\*\*\* early 11\*\*\*\*th\*\*\*\* centuryâ€¦idk too confusing and I'm not very historically accurate, but, it doesn't really matter. I'm not going to use the Romeo and Juliet story that is literally staring me in the face. No. That's too easy. I'm going to do something completely historically irrelevant because History was never my strong suit and we've already got plenty of suspension of disbelief to play along with Toothless (Love that dragon!).\*\*

\*\*Thank you Zoa-lii and GoodLuckMother for reviewing. :)\*\*

### Chapter 1: Get Out

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"Well, this is just great," Hiccup said examining Toothless's tail. The edges were frayed and torn from Toothless's less than spectacular landing. Who was he kidding? The dragon nose-dived into the ground causing the ground to turn up and form a small crater in the cliff-side. Breathing slowly, the nightfury decided that he could just nod off in said crater and leave Hiccup to struggle out of the harness and figure out where he was alone. To the dragon's credit, Toothless had been flying for way too long and he had to lug Hiccup around at the same time, so he deserved the rest.

Running basic checks on Toothless's tail, Hiccup couldn't find anything drastically destroyed and they should be fine to head home after they figured out which way was north. The harness and saddle weren't going anywhere (Toothless was sleeping on it) leaving Hiccup to figure out where they were. The reason he was so frustrated was because he had no idea where he was and the fog, which seemed to have a thing for catching up to them at the most inconvenient points, had flooded the land around them and kept him from seeing the distant stars that were probably shining by now. Instead of squinting through the blurry gray mist, Hiccup had decided to just take a breather here and relax a little. He stuffed his helmet into a pouch he had sewn into the side of the saddle and sat down with nothing to listen to but the sound of his own stomach growling.

He lasted about ten seconds before that pitiful existence became unbearable and he dug the half a day old fish out of the saddle and started gathering wood for a fire from the ever-so-plentiful forest.

It would have been easier for him to light the fire if Toothless would have just woken up. Instead, Hiccup had to use the classic flint rock and hope the spark caught on the dead leaves.

At the sound of a crackling fire, Toothless purred in his sleep and rolled over so that his stomach was to the flames and knocking right against Hiccup. Sometimes, the dragon was a more cat-like creature than anything else and thought he was about the same size as that kind of creature. A slight smile crossed Hiccup's lips.

"At least it's not all bad," Hiccup said to himself. In the morning, they'd get something other than fish and then they'd figure out a way home.

A low moaning noise caught Hiccup's attention and he squinted into the distance. Just visible in the fog was some kind of dimly flickering blue light. Hiccup pushed off from the ground and called out to the person that had to be holding the light. "Hello?"

As he neared, the fog thickened but the light didn't grow. It stayed close to the ground and the moaning grew louder as the light grew brighter. He couldn't make out the exact shape, but it just looked like a little flame floating in the middle of the fog. Hiccup moved to tap it with his foot when it suddenly disappeared. Jumping back, Hiccup frantically searched the ground beneath him for the flame.

Few feet to his right, another appeared, making the same moaning sound. Hiccup stared at the flame in a mixture of fear and awe. He took a step away and one suddenly popped up in front of him, making him trip over his own feet. An entire line of them were hovering in front of him.

"Gah! I'm on a rock with weird blue flames. There's nothing wrong with that. No. Hiccup. It happens all the time," he spoke to himself as he scrambled to his feet and hustled away. The moaning kept on following him and blue flames kept on popping up behind him as he moved back to his small fire and Toothless. They kept following him! He spun on his heel and waved at the blue things, "Shoo! Go away!"

By the time he was back at the fire pit against Toothless, there was a straight line of blue flames leading into the fog. The last time he went into a fog, besides yesterday, he ended up almost getting eaten by the queen of all dragons; that didn't end very well.

If those flames were leading him into a fog, there was a problem. They started hovering in front of him and wouldn't go away! Ugh! It was going to be a long night if he was going to listen to that ominous moaning for the next few hours.

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Merida looked at the distant rising golden sun painted onto the horizon. For most of the night, she had just been staring at the stars and shaking from excitement. She and her guide had managed to set up camp just as a murky fog had come in from the horizon. With only enough time to gaze at the beauty of the Bear's Tooth, she was forced to wait an extra night before exploring the vast wilderness. This morning, she could hardly keep her eagerness tame as she rode

Angus towards the narrow passage that separated her from adventure. Nothing in the entire world could ruin this spectacular day.

"Are you sure we should be going this far, Princess?" called her guide.

There was that, but Merida had a plan. She had planned on him making himself scarce like he did every other day. Apparently, him lagging behind was not on purpose, and he now insisted on accompanying her wherever she went. For the entire morning, she had been trying to find a way to lose him, but she was unable to out run him, outwit him, and she couldn't scare him away with a few cheap tricks. Now, she looked to the skies at that golden painted horizon for some kind of distraction as Angus trekked through the forest, just bordering the Bear's Tooth.

She decided that it was best to just take her chances with the guide and ride straight into the Bear's Tooth down the main path she had planned in her head for the past few days. If he was going to object, it wasn't like he'd be able to stop her. She was the princess! The consequences of her actions was something she planned to face laterâ€|she wasn't exactly thinking about that just yet. Just the rewards as they started down a narrow path carved into the side of the cliff that descended into the Bear's Tooth.

With every click of her horse's hooves against the flat rocky ground, she waited for her escort to point out the obvious. But, just as he said her name, there was a loud crack. Looking down beneath Angus's hooves, Merida could make out a large gap in the stone. Before she had time to shout, another series of cracks split beneath her and Merida could feel Angus's unsteady weight shift and topple to one side as her Clydesdale charged forward. Angus managed to topple to one side as the rock slid down into the forest, dragging horse and rider with it.

In his frantic sprint, Angus tossed his head back, knocking straight into Merida's forehead and causing the world to blur and fade.

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"Toothless! Toothless!" Hiccup called as he tracked through the forest. How did he manage to lose an entire dragon over night? It's not like Toothless was one to disappearâ€|no, never mindâ€|that was actually a habit of his. But, when Hiccup had woken up this morning, he was gone without a trace. An hour passed by and Hiccup couldn't even hear a distant growl or any kind of sign of distress. The only thing worse than hearing distress was hearing nothing. It's not like Hiccup was one to keep a cool head considering the circumstances. "Toothless! Buddy! Come on!"

Still no response as he trudged through the forest. The gods really did hate him. A low moaning sound tracked behind him.

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Merida's vision was blurred and there was a slight ringing in her ears. What just happened? She was surrounded by trees and Angus was nowhere in sight. "Angus?" Merida whispered. She cleared her throat and called out a little louder, "Angus!" She tried to move, but she

realized she was caught. "Angus!" she called again, in vain.

Surrounding her was an enormous pile of rubble that hugged at a cliff lined by trees. Some were even growing on the drop and their roots were visibly diving in and out of the rock. The dense green leaves blocked her view of the sky and she couldn't make out even the ridge they had been walking on earlier.

She felt pressure on her leg. Rock and gravel was dusted on her woolen green dress. As she examined herself further, she realized half of her dress was buried in the rubble. Some stones caught on the edges and Merida had to dig her leg out of the rubble. With every shift, her leg stung. \_No. No, no, no. \_

She could \_not\_ have an injured leg. As she uncovered each rock, her heart fluttered faster when the sting didn't go away. By the time her leg was pulled free, she realized the pain was permanent and she hastily pulled back the folds of her dress to inspect her leg. Pulling off her shoe, the first thing her eyes noticed was the swollen and slowly blackening color on her last three toes. She winced at sight and when she tried to move them, it was terrible pain. Were they broken?

Closing her eyes she touched the edge and tried to move it forward and back. It was painful, but it didn't make her scream, just hiss. Her leg was black and bruised too. If it was already such a dark color, she must have been unconscious for a long while. She looked back up at the trees. "Abram!" she called out her guide's name.

No response. That was his nameâ€¦wasn't it? "Abram!" she called again, a little unsure. Maybe it wasn't. "Abraham?" No. It was definitely Abram. What did it matter? No response!

Where was she? Well, the Bear's Tooth for one. Pushing herself to a standing position, she kept her weight shifted to her right side and her left leg just barely touched the ground. Her hip rattled and she realized that her quiver of arrows was still fastened to her side. Where was her bow? It was with Angus. She cupped her hands together and called again "Angus!"

Hobbling forward, keeping her weight on one leg, she called out for him as she paced through the forest. The sudden clump of hooves on the forest floor never sounded so relieving. For a minute, Merida thought she was on her own. The Clydesdale came trotting forward swishing its tail forward and back. Merida shook her head as he stopped just before her. Excitedly, she patted his head and hobbled around him. Not a scratch on the horse. How did he manage to make it out of the rubble without issue? Maybe she was thrown off. She couldn't remember. It didn't matter. Angus was here.

Luckily, her ever so protective mother had made Merida pack wraps incase she was hurt. Merida was glad she listened. Wrapping the calf of her leg and the front of her foot relieved most of the pain. It was just a bruise and a banged bone. She'd be fine. It took some time to get back on Angus without her foot stinging and throwing her off. But, she managed.

Now, what to doâ€¦wellâ€¦now that she had time to think and her head cleared up, she figured she had two basic options. One would be to go

back and figure out how to get back to Abramâ€|Abraham? No, Abram. Or, she could explore on her own. Wellâ€|she had been trying to lose him all day. Butâ€|smart thing would be to go back to Abram and tell him she was alright. Butâ€|adventure. The Bear's Toothâ€|This was her only chance. It'd take hours to find the path back upâ€|butâ€|Merida exhaled bitterly. She was going to have to do the smart thing, wasn't she?

"Come on, Angus," Merida tapped the side of the horse with her heel.

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"Would you guys stop following me?" Hiccup shouted at the blue flames that tracked behind him in the forest. Half a day and he had gotten nowhere! Toothless was still missing! Hiccups voice was already strained enough from calling out his name, but those moaning things followed him to the point of endless annoyance. It didn't help that his metal leg wasn't the best at traveling through the forest floor. As an act of defiance, one of them appeared in front of him.

"You're kidding me," Hiccup said, kicking the thing out of the way and into dust. But, another replaced him only a few feet to the left. "Unless you can point out the direction to a black dragon, I'd like it if you all disappeared!"

More of them appeared in a line leading him to the left. Hiccup slapped his forehead. These things weren't going to quit! "Why do you want me to follow you anyway?" he asked the blue flameâ€|he was talking to a flame. He wasn't crazy just yet; it did have eyes, mouth and arms, that was close enough to a human's.

He didn't know what else to do. It's not like Toothless was responding to him! "Toothless!" he called out again.

No response. The glowing things were right in front of him and leading him left. Hiccup looked down the path they were leading him. It was just a bunch of trees to him. So was everywhere else. Hiccup growled and shook his head. "Fine. Fine. You win," Hiccup turned in their direction. "You better not be taking me off a cliff or something."

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Merida was following the border of the drop to try and find the pathway up that she had tracked down earlier. All the while she was calling, "Abram!" She hardly knew if that was really his name. Why didn't she take a friend that she knew the name of? Becauseâ€|becauseâ€|never mind that. The point was she couldn't find him or the path back up the cliff. She just hoped she'd be able to find it soon so that she could head back into the Bear's Tooth without an entire horror story of some kind of "lost princess" rising up.

She rolled her eyes. It better not be her entire day on the line over a bruised leg. Angus had thrown her more than once and she had gotten worse injuries on those occasions. She tapped Angus again and had him speed into a full gallop. Her leg stung with every jolt, but it was something she knew how to cope with and that small injury was the last thing on her mind. Weaving through the trees, all she had on her



mind was the time she was losing by finding her way back. Galloping in the general direction of the cliff kept her from getting lost; however, the trees were sometimes too dense for Angus to navigate and she lost sight of the cliff more than once.

Suddenly, a loud roar echoed above her head. Angus whined and reared up to his back legs. Merida kept her grip on the horse, but struggled to stay on when Angus shifted into full gallop again through the trees, away from the cliff and in every-which way so fast that Merida couldn't tell what anything was. Another roar screeched out above her and it was closer! Her red hair was flying in front of her eyes when she tried to look up at the sky.

Scrambling, Merida started to feel around in Angus's saddle for her bow. Shaking hands slipped the bow from its wrap and plucked an arrow from her quiver. Knocking an arrow, she readied herself for anything as Angus frantically dashed.

A loud boom and a flash of black. Angus cried out and stopped short. Merida's hands weren't on the reigns and she was thrown forward. In the few seconds she had, she dropped her bow and braced herself for impact. Rolling on one shoulder, she toppled to the side as something screeched. The impact banged her shoulder badly and it didn't do anything to help her leg. A mess of tangled red hair was covering her vision and she frantically tossed it back. Her eyes darted around the floor and she spotted her white hickory bow. Angus kicked up the leaves as he galloped towards the noise. Merida shot towards the bow and fumbled through her quiver for arrows. She couldn't feel very many! It had been full! Knocking the bow, she looked up to take aim. A black figure was charging at her with malice in its slit eyes. Merida didn't have time to focus. Just plucking the string back, she released without even anchoring the bow.

A deafening roar rang out behind Merida. Her fingers were shaking so quickly, she dropped the next arrow more than once as she ran for safety. Hot flames suddenly appeared behind her. Letting out a squeal, Merida took cover behind a tree. Knocking the arrow, she watched the flames consume the forest floor next to her. Drawing back the bowstring, she exhaled slowly. Her heart was racing and pounding right out of her chest. The flames stopped. That was her chance. Ducking out from the tree, she released the arrow. The black thing charged towards her with snake-like eyes.

Merida sprinted away. A gust of wind from the speed of the creature blew her hair in front of her face. Feeling for another arrow, Merida knocked it and released. It brushed over the figure and hit the tree. The creature, whatever it was, opened its mouth and breathed fire! Rolling out of the way, Merida felt her quiver for another arrow. There were none left! Where were her arrows? They were scattered on the ground. She looked up in fear at the beast that was now circling her. The pain that had been doused by adrenaline was now starting to reemerge.

Black and menacing, the creature's sharp teeth glistened like knives and poison-black claws scraped deep into the ground. Something brown was on its back. A low growling came from the scaled creature as he slowly circled her. Merida circled back, making sure it couldn't go behind her. She stepped on an arrow. Her eyes darted from the creature to the arrow. The black beast was inhaling. This was her chance! Scooping the arrow up, she knocked it and drew

back.

"TOOTHLESS!"

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\*\*Happy Birthday to me. Tell me what you think. Questions? Concerns? Fav. part? Hate something? Love something?\*\*

### 3. Chapter 3

\*\*â€|I'm going to writer hell for this chapter.\*\*

### Chapter 2: Unspoken

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"TOOTHLESS!"

Something knocked into Merida's side and toppled her to the ground, making her release the arrow as a burst of fire flew over her head. Keeping a death grip on her bow, her hand banged hard into the ground. Merida's tangled red hair fell over her eyes, but someone was holding her down. She pushed the attacker away and got to her feet. She quickly drew an arrow from her quiver and took aim at the new enemy. Behind her tangled red locks, she saw a boy holding his hands up shouting, "Hold on! Hold on!" he was looking in two directions when he said it. Merida didn't want to turn her gaze away from the boy, but her hair was in the way of seeing whomever he was talking to.

Merida heard a screech and decided to take her chances with the scraggly boy and face the black creature. Almost immediately, he was in front of her, between her and the giant black beast. "It's alright," Hiccup said, turning his attention to her and the thing. Was he trying to reason with it? It was going to strike him down if he kept it up!

"Get outta the way!" Merida scolded. "You're goin' to get yaself keeled!"

"No, he's a friend," the brunette said as the black reptile surrounded him possessively. "It's all right. He's not going to hurt you."

Merida looked from the boy to the beast. Its snake like eyes were still narrow and cold, but not soulless. Flecks of green and yellow she hadn't spotted before and a slight crane in its neck as it moved made Merida see a thinking being. It was sizing her up the same way she was to him. Black wings were spread over the boy and out to the treetops to show off his size and a tail with some kind of red contraption attached to one side flicked across the floor. This creature had a leather saddle strapped around its middle and onto its reptilian back. Merida kept her posture straight and her eyes narrowed as she looked over its black claws and sharp extended teeth.

Slowly, Merida lowered her bow and let the tension from the string draw back. At the same time, the black creature straightened from its crouch little by little as the two had an unspoken understanding. The boy in the center moved towards Merida, causing her to instinctively to pull on the string of her bow, causing his pet to charge her. Merida fully drew and released the arrow, frantically changing her aim just before the creature pinned her between its sharp claws. She had no time to scream. Her bad leg banged hard against the ground.

"Toothless!" the boy shouted again, a little weaker this time.

Merida tried to look to see what had happened, all she could see were black claws and yellow eyes or her red hair. The thing looked from Merida to the boy and back before letting go of her and moving towards its master. Merida scrambled up to a sitting position, grabbing at her chest to remind herself she was still alive.

"Buddy, are you hurt?" he said. Merida saw the boy staggering toward the winged creature. Merida saw one of her arrows stuck in the creature's saddle and one had torn its wing. The thing sniffed the boy's chest and he pushed it away. "Noâ€¦it's alright, Buddy. Didn't get me in the middle," he started to cough. Merida only just noticed the blood coming from his sideâ€¦was that? No. No, no, no, no. She had shot him!

Merida tried to rush over but the black creature protectively blocked her. "Toothless, relax," he said hastily. Merida heard a bump and the creature looked behind itself to see the boy. Merida couldn't see what was happening, until the reptile circled him, sniffing his hair, feet, chest, looking for a sign of consciousness. He grabbed the boy with his claws and tried to fly away, but he hardly managed to make it a few meters above Merida's head before crashing to the ground again and curling his wing in towards his body with the boy tightly in his clutches. It tried to climb a tree to glide, but keeping the boy with it was too much of a challenge, and the black-scaled beast flopped on its back.

What was Merida supposed to do now? Where was Angus? Calling out her horse's name, she backtracked to where this conflict had first started, but her black horse was nowhere in sight. Arrows were everywhere on the ground and as Merida plucked them up; she noticed specks of blood in the cluttered forest floor. The pain was coming back to her ankle as adrenaline died inside of her and it was a painful task to follow the splattered trail. Leading backwards, they stopped a little before a dead doe with the circular bite of the black creature.

In the tops of certain trees, it was thicker than others. Claw marks were engraving themselves on the sides of the tall bark, where it had supported itself. It had been hunting. Maybe she had come too close with Angus?

She didn't know. Either way, this was starting to become more and more her fault. Merida moved back towards the beast and the boy. Merida took a deep breath, trying to relax herself. She kept her bow loosely on one hand, not comfortable at all around this creature. Somehow, she had to get to the boy.

When it saw her coming, the giant black beast, arched its back and growled, showing off its teeth. Merida froze in place and tightened her grip on the bow. Her gaze focused on the boy behind the creature. She couldn't see where the arrow was and that made her even more nervous. Its eyes were sizing her up. Merida could see a hint of anxiousness in its irises. The creature kept on looking back to its-his master and then back to her. His feet were restless as he tried to cover the boy from all angles.

Merida raised her free hand and said calmly, "It's okayâ€¦it's okay."

He hissed and took a step towards her. Merida backed up, moving her free hand to her hip quiver. The arrows jangled between her fingers. When she did pluck one up, the creature started to charge. Merida lifted her hand up into the air, dropping the arrow. Immediately, the black beast slowed down. How was she supposed to do this if she couldn't defend herself? Looking past the creature, she saw the boy. It was her responsibility to help him.

Hesitantly, she reached for the buckle of her hip quiver and undid the only sense of protection she had, letting it drop to the floor in an angry clatter. Her left hand gripped a little tighter on her bow, even though she knew it was useless by now. The black beast took another offensive step forward, driving her back. Merida shouted, "I want to help, ye beast!"

He froze in place, but still growled. His eyes were focusing on her bow. Hesitantly, Merida lowered her bow too. "I want to help," she repeated. Merida knew the thing probably didn't understand. When her mother had become a real bear, she didn't understand what Merida was saying. This creature wasn't going to be any different. It was dumb and just defending what he thought was his. Merida couldn't reason with that kind of thing, she could only tip-toe her way around it. Keeping her voice calm and relaxing, she tried to at least give it some kind of message.

Taking a sturdy step forward, Merida held her breath as the creature growled at her. She took another step, and he sank lower to the ground, curling to pounce. One more step made him jump in front of her. Merida said quickly, "I know! I know!"

His piercing eyes were feigning intimidation. Merida watched as they kept wandering towards the boy, in an endless debate on which person he should focus on. Merida raised her hands slowly and bent down, trying to make herself seem as small and harmless as possible. Backing towards the boy, the creature scooped him up with a toothless mouth and tried carrying him. The beast didn't go far before he dropped the boy and started flicking his tongue out of his mouth, trying to expel some nasty taste. Merida took the animal's distraction as her opening to get to the boy. Only a meter away, the reptile's attention again went to her and he was growling again.

Merida could see the malice in his eyes; eyes that pinned down a guilty being. Merida knew it already, and this creature made a point of emphasizing it. "But, what are ye goin' to do that'll help? If ye don't let me near him, then he's not goin' to get any better!"

He rose up a little from his curved position and Merida slowly made

her way towards the boy, keeping her steps calm. Not even a meter away from the boy, the black creature jumped forward and stood over the boy. "Don't be so prideful!"

The creature backed away a little, still hovering over the boy. Merida bent down towards him. When she reached to touch the boy, the creature was nervously growling as one last desperate attempt. Merida just saw blood coming from his side. What was she supposed to do? If he was scratched, she would have known, but shot by an arrow was a different concept that she was not remotely familiar with. She moved back his fur vest and pulled up his shirt slowly to see the wound. Under a coating of blood, Merida couldn't see where it started and where it ended. At the sight of this, the creature hissed and Merida was afraid he'd charge again. She dropped the shirt, to make him stop.

Merida felt her heart racing and her stomach sinking. She didn't know where she had shot him, but it looked terrible. She ripped off a piece of the hem of her dress. Merida didn't know a lot about bandaging wounds. Usually one of the servants fixed her up while she sat and complained about how long it took. No one was really ever listening and she was just trying to pass the time when she did it. Now, she wished she had taken more time to watch what they did.

The beast was padding his feet nervously. Merida tried her best to hide the panic she was feeling. She tried moving him to bind it, but the creature nervously crawled forward, hovering over Merida. Instinctively, Merida tried to push her away but the creature hissed and she realized what she was doing. Drawing back her hand quickly, she bowed her head and said softly, trying to keep what little peace there was between them, "Just, keep back." He didn't obey. Of course he wouldn't, he was an animal. It couldn't understand her and she was going to have to work around it.

Binding the wound sloppily, the creature moaned and growled during the entire process. The black beast spread his wings out as far as they'd go and stomped his feet on the ground whenever the boy winced or groaned. Every movement made Merida tenser. Half the time, her eyes were focused more on the animal than on the boy. She had to concentrate on one thing at a time, but she was nervous, her hands were shaking and the urge to scream whenever that thing growled was hard to resist. She had to finish this and then—Merida would figure out what to do after she had found fresh water and maybe even Angus. For now, she had to just think of what was before her.

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Toothless watched as the red-headed human began tying a string around Hiccup. She was careless, brutal and the enemy and right now, she had her hands on Hiccup. Toothless wanted to singe that red hair until it became a true raging fire. He could take care of Hiccup on his own. He didn't need a huntress that couldn't tell a deer from a dragon- a boy for that matter! What an outrage!

Whoever had given her a bow should be sacrificed to the great gods. \_She\_ should be sacrificed to the great gods for his wing and saddle alone! He could feel the stinging breeze as that side of his wing uncomfortably stretched its leathery surface and fanned the air. He tried to lick away the wound, but it had the pain of a deep-rooted

torn. If she was going to be able to fix anything, that red-headed human should be able to fix his wing. Toothless had often seen the females stitching things together in Berk. They could stitch together his wing just as easily if they wanted. But, that barbaric, rat-nest-haired thing probably didn't know the first thing about stitching either!

Unsure and unconfident in what she was doing, she was like a hatchling just staggering out of its egg. Toothless hated it. She was hurting him more for all he knew. His tail twitched with anticipation, ready to strike. He had to strike. She tightened the knot and Hiccup groaned in pain. Toothless instantly charged forward.

"Shut it!" she called. Her piercing blue eyes were fearful and angry all at once. "I'm tryin' ma best!"

Her best wasn't enough. Where was that bearded man with the changing arms when he was needed? Even the annoying double hatchlings would be useful now! This human-this human-was doing more than he could. Toothless hated that. He paced uneasily and watched. How could he be so easily reduced to this? He was a proud dragon of ancient times and yet, despite his great speed, agility, and strength, he was useless.

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**\*\*Merida, why must you have an accent with debatable spelling? WHY? Thanks for the support and follows. This is kind of half finished but it's been a while so I figured might as well. Okay, tell me what you think.\*\***

#### 4. Chapter 4

##### Chapter 3: A Deal

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Merida huffed and looked at her handy work. It was sloppy, it was awkward and it was the best she could do with a giant beast staring at her with its teeth at the ready and claws digging eagerly into the earth. His eyes were pinned on her with every movement. Merida felt like she was dancing in front of a bear and only luck was keeping her alive. Even when she was finished, the reptile circled around the boy and nudged him every now and then. Merida had to call to him. "Don't do that!" He'd hiss at her and she'd retreat.

Merida took pride in standing up to danger, but she was no fool. That thing could breath fire! When she managed to collect her bow and arrows, much to the beast's dislike (she had to put her foot down somewhere), she set up a small fire and managed to find a creek a good long walk away. At least the water didn't have worms. That was something. She didn't have anything to carry it with. That was disappointing and rather agitating. Merida had to keep doubling back from the camp to the creek to get enough to clean the boy's wound a little better. She tried to convince herself it wasn't so terrible, but it was. The reptile only travelled to the creek briefly for a

drink before circling back to his defensive position. He didn't have anything to carry water with, but he could have been some kind of help! By the end of the day, she was a grumbling mess. She dug the metal edge of her arrow into the ground and made a circle around the camp to keep out trows.\*

The reptile, when she had circled around him, broke the line by flicking his tail. Merida redrew it, and he flicked it away again. She grumbled. Backing up a few steps, she had to redraw the line much further than she wanted it to be from the fire. She could have sworn she saw the black beast shift slightly so that he could reach the line and flick it away for the fun of it. Merida was too tired to get up by then.

She went a night without eating because of this entire incident. Abramâ€|or was it Abraham? She didn't have the slightest clue what his name was. She'd only met him a few days ago. He knew her name, of course. She was the princess! It was his job to know her name and his job to accompany her. That meant it was his guide's job to find her or Angus and get her out of a mess this big. She didn't like it, but that's the way it was. Then again, this was a situation far beyond her skill. Abram would be useful in this circumstance if he knew how to mend a wound like the boy's. Did he? She didn't have the slightest clue. She never talked to him and he never talked to her, unless it was required.

That meant it was just her and the reptilian beast across the fire that could help this boy. Merida realized that the beast, with its eyes glowing dimly in the firelight, was staring straight at her. "What am I doin' now?" she asked, crossing her arms in annoyance. The reptile just huffed and placed his head at the boy's side. Merida was aware this thing didn't understand her. She was perfectly aware that he wasn't going to respond because he didn't know what she was saying anyway, but it was better to humanize him. He was less intimidating if she could convince herself that he could think. Maybe he could. Bears couldn't think. Her mother was in danger of losing her mind to become a bear. That was a wild animal. This thingâ€|it seemed domestic. It was a loyal pet to this human. It must have had emotions. It had to. Merida didn't know to what extent and something that gigantic and monstrous was capable of.

"Ye don't have to be so bitter," she grumbled, curling a little more into her knees. Beira\* was already moving into the land. She shivered. "I'm only trying to help."

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Toothless raised his head at the girl's petty excuse. She was just trying to help? He looked at Hiccup, unconscious on the ground. She was a great help. He snarled at the girl and she turned her eyes back to the fire. "What am I doin'? It's not ma faultâ€|." she said in a whisper, but he could hear it fine with his keen senses. What was she doing? She didn't know? What kind of hatchling was this? She should know what she is doing! Did she even know how to use her weapon properly? Probably no better than an egg knew how to use talons. He would have set fire in front of her feet as punishment for her ignorance, but there was a certain level of dignity he wanted to retain. He would not stoop to such a low level as to play such a mindless trick so late in the day. Maybe tomorrow, in the early morning, when the golden sun was high and welcoming, he would; not

now in the bitter cold HÃ¶r\* sent for them.

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Merida heard something shuffling. At first, she thought it was a squirrel or a grounded bird, but then it came closer to her. It could have just been a curious animal, nothing important. Then, there was a loud roar and a yelp. Merida sprung to her feet, with a jolt of pain from her bad leg, to see that the reptile stood in front of a hooded being. Whatever it was, it circled around the reptile with a perfectly straight, almost playful posture. Lanky and quick, it evaded every strike from the reptile and kept a walking stick's distance from it.

The hooded being craned its face towards Merida. She couldn't see much of it in the shadow of the hood. "Would you tell your beast to lie still? I'm not here to harm it," said a boy's voice.

"What are ye here to do?" Merida asked, bending towards her bow and quiver slightly.

"You're in trouble, are you not?" the hooded man said, pointing past the black-scaled creature to the boy. "He's down with a fever by now. In a few days he'll be rejoining the ground if you don't let me help."

Merida stopped moving toward her bow, but her fingers twitched toward the weapon. The black-scaled reptile fanned out its wings, making itself larger in front of the hooded figure. "Why would ye help?"

"It's my job to be of assistance to those in need in this land." He pointed his walking stick at her and then the beast. "Your kind is in need," he looked back towards the black creature. He charged the hooded figure, driving him back. "He is feisty."

"Who exactly are ye?"

"A friend."

"Ye don't have a name?"

"I do, but it's not one you'd remember. Neither would this thing," he pointed his stick at the black reptile again. This time, the reptile blew out a small ball of fire at the feat of the hooded stranger. The stranger just jumped out of the way with a slight laugh. "Besides, my name is not important. What is important is what I do. I heal and he won't last more than a few days without fixing that accident." The stranger pointed at the boy.

"He looks fine to me," Merida said, lying to herself more than the stranger.

The stranger laughed and pointed at the boy. "Go ahead, feel for a pulse; you're not going to find much."

Merida froze, looking at the boy. She was afraid to confirm that. If she did, that meant she was responsible for it, she was the cause of it all. But, she had to see, and the black beast only just let her near Merida, constantly looking from the stranger to her. Merida



wasn't very good at finding a pulse to begin with, but when she did, it was slow and faint. That realization felt like fire at her fingertips and she yanked her hand away from it. She couldn't be the cause of all of this, she couldn't be the reason for this, and she wouldn't.

Merida had been warned about plenty of evils in the forest. A hooded man was not one of them. He was barefoot, but no hooves. His cloak was plain brown, no shade of red. His voice was not a combination of dozens in one. "What can ye do for him?"

"Save his life, to start."

Merida saw the reptile was looking between her and the boy, trying to stay intimidating while still keeping an eye on Merida. He was offering a solution to the problem. Why wouldn't she take it? This boy would be saved. His life wouldn't be on her hands. She knew that was a selfish reason, but it was the only one that she could think of as guilt was heavily weighing down on her. She hated the feeling of it and if she could erase it, she'd do anything. Noble causes, although still in her mind, were not her driving force at the moment. Maybe last night, but not when she had taken the time to realize what she had done. "Fine then, do what ye think ye can." Merida approached the black beast, cautiously, and tried to bring him back. The beast didn't listen to her and still stood steadfast, guarding the boy. Merida hissed, "He's right. I don't know how to fix him and neither do you. The closest physician is days' ride away! Ye want him to get better? This is all we've got!"

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Toothless didn't like the smell of thisâ€|no, it wasn't human. It wasn't a good smell, whatever it was. He didn't like the look of it either. He'd rather this thing stayed far, far away from his friend. But, the hatchling was right; she was terrible at fixing Hiccup. This thingâ€|he could set it on fire if anything went wrong. Nothing better go wrong. He slowly backed away with the tug of the hatchling.

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He stopped, kneeling in front of the boy, and said, "I'm not doing this without a price, of course."

"What kind of payment do ye expect?" Merida asked, more weary of deals since the incident with her mother. Sense kicked in and prevented her from fully surrendering to guilt. "I can promise ye gold, but that's the end of it. Don't do anythin' if ye want anythin' else."

"Nothing major, just a souvenir, a scale from your black creature there," he pointed at the black beast with the edge of his walking stick. The creature hissed. "Never seen anything quite like it before. I think that's more than fair on my part, don't you think?" Merida felt just as uneasy. It was just a scale, but it seemed like a strange request to her. It was just a scale. That was a small price to pay. It might have been less strange with gold, but this was harmless enough. "It's for the life of a friend. I don't see much of a need to think it over," said the stranger. He extended an open hand towards her. It wasn't for the life of a friend. It was for the life

of someone she was responsible for: a complete stranger. That was much worse. If it had beenâ€¦umâ€¦If it had been a friend, there would have been less responsibility and pressure.

She looked at the reptile. "Ye have any thoughts?" she asked it, half-joking. The question wasn't exactly genuine, seeing that Merida had practically made up her mind. The beast growled and lowered to the ground, his eyes fixed on the stranger. His tail flicked the back of Merida's legs, pushing her forward. She assumed that meant approval, if it meant anything at all. "Fine then. One scale to save him."

They made a short agreement. His hands were cold and she felt a prick on her palm. There was nothing wrong with her hands, besides the calluses at her fingertips from shooting, when she looked at it.

"Good," he said. Merida didn't see what he did, but suddenly, the boy burst awake and jumped up from the ground with a clap of the stranger's hand and some kind of powder falling over him. The boy was panting heavily and his eyes moved from the stranger, to Merida, to Toothless, and over around again.

"Does anyone want to fill me in on what exactly is going on?" he said, stumbling on his own two feet.

"Nothing. I'll be taking this," the stranger walked past the black beast and plucked a scale from his back. The creature sneered and let a puff of fire ignite at the heels of the stranger. "I'll be seeing you, Princess."

Merida froze. When had she introduced herself? When had she even said her name? Before she could even think of anything, an outstretched wing pushed her to the ground as the black creature charged towards the boy once the stranger was gone. The boy was laughing wearily, still a little shaky. Merida looked back to where the stranger had been. There was nothing but trees.

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**\*\*Schoolâ€¦that's the only excuse I've got...\*\***

**\*\*SHHOOORRRRTTT chapter- BUT! Hey, look: got something done! That took too long! Pacingâ€¦need to work on it and Merida is getting close to characterization danger zone, my bad. Still, I'm getting somewhere with this story, don't worry. Thanks everyone for reviewing.\*\***

Trows: Ugly mythical baby/traveler kidnappers that live in the ground.

Beira: Scottish mythology Queen of winter found in \_Story of Bride and Angus\_. (Good Ol' Jack Frost pops into the myth at one point-kind of, sort of, almost- depends on your definition)

HÃ¶r: God of winter in Norse mythology. (Probably got this one wrong. My bad)

-I feel like a pompous jerk every time I do definitions.

End  
file.